

Message Text

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ORIGIN ARA-10

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY PORT AU PRINCE

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EFIN, HA

SUBJECT: HAITIAN POSTAL DEBT DEMARCHE

REF: A) PORT AU PRINCE 2087; B) STATE 205208

1. AS SUGGESTED PARA 2 REF A, ON AUGUST 26, HAITIAN AMBASSADOR GEORGES SALOMON WAS INVITED TO DEPARTMENT TO DISCUSS THE HAITIAN POSTAL DEBT. HE WAS RECEIVED BY ARA DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY JOSEPH GRUNWALD. MR. GRUNWALD STATED DEPARTMENT'S PLEASURE WITH HAITIAN PERFORMANCE UNDER THE 1970 POSTAL DEBT AGREEMENT. HE POINTED TO UNRESOLVED DEBT PROBLEM INCLUDING AMOUNT OWED U.S. AIR CARRIER, PAN AM, SINCE 1966 AND ACCUMULATED DEBT TO USPS SINCE 1970. THE DEBT WAS CHARACTERIZED AS A SMALL PROBLEM, BUT ONE WHICH IF NOT RESOLVED COULD AFFECT HAITIAN ELIGIBILITY FOR USG FINANCING. CONGRESSIONAL CONCERNS ABOUT THE GENERAL PROBLEM OF DEBT ARREARAGES AND THE DEPARTMENT'S RESPONSIBILITIES IN RESOLVING THEM WERE DISCUSSED.

2. AMBASSADOR SALOMON WAS QUITE CERTAIN THE PROBLEM

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WOULD BE SATISFACTORILY RESOLVED IN THE NEAR FUTURE. HE

SAID THAT HE HAD DISCUSSED THE MATTER WITH GOH SECRETARY OF COMMERCE ANTONIO ANDRE DURING THE LATTER'S

VISIT THIS MONTH TO WASHINGTON. ANDRE HAD EXPRESSED THE INTENTION OF CARRYING OUT A PLAN WHICH WOULD ELIMINATE THE ENTIRE DEBT IN QUESTION IN PERHAPS FIVE MONTHS. (DEBT OWED UNDER THE 1970 AGREEMENT WOULD CONTINUE TO BE PAID OFF UNDER THE TERMS OF THAT ARRANGEMENT.) SALOMON EXPLAINED THAT THE HAITIAN POSTAL SERVICE HAD BEEN CREATED TO OPERATE IN A MANNER WHICH ENCOURAGED INEFFICIENCY AND UNDER THE MISCONCEPTION THAT THE GOVERNMENT WOULD SUBSIDIZE ITS LOSSES. ACTUALLY THIS HAS NOT BEEN THE CASE. ALSO, DUE TO THE EFFECTS OF THE FRAUDULENT AUDIBON STAMP ISSUANCE OF LAST YEAR, THE POSTAL SERVICE HAD SUFFERED A LOSS OF REVENUE FROM PHILATELIC STAMP SALES.

3. THE AMBASSADOR WAS TOLD THAT A PLAN WHICH WOULD RESOLVE THE DEBT PROBLEM IN A MATTER OF SEVERAL MONTHS IS ACCEPTABLE AND WE WOULD LIKE TO HAVE THE DETAILS OF SUCH A PLAN. IT WAS SUGGESTED, HOWEVER, THAT PAYMENT OF AN INITIAL AMOUNT AT THE EARLIEST POSSIBLE DATE WOULD BE AN IMPORTANT DEMONSTRATION OF HAITI'S GOOD FAITH IN RESOLVING THE ISSUE. THE AMBASSADOR SAID HE WOULD REPORT TO HIS GOVERNMENT AND WOULD BE BACK IN TOUCH WITH THE DEPARTMENT.

4. A COPY OF THE AIDE-MEMOIRE PRESENTED TO SALOMIN IS BEING POUCHED TO POST. KISSINGER

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